

City of Las Vegas

CMIR No:

CITY MANAGER INFORMATION REPORT11/20/07

DEPARTMENT: Office of the City Manager**NAME:** Douglas A. Selby**SUBJECT:** City Council Salary Survey

This Information Report provides the results of staff research into compensation practices for elected officials in local government and presents suggested options for an adjustment to the compensation of the Las Vegas City Council.

Background

The current annual compensation for members of the Las Vegas City Council is \$59,657 for the position of Mayor and \$45,410¹ for the position of Council Member (table one). The last base adjustment to this compensation was made in 1986. Since that time, the only increases have been annual increases based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI). While the annual increases may help keep pace with inflation, those adjustments do not take into account the changing expectations placed on Council members as the city has grown in size and stature.

The city has experienced unprecedented growth during this 21 year period whereby the city's geographic boundaries have expanded by 105 percent from 63.6 square miles to 130 square miles; its population has increased more than 217 percent from 189,106 to nearly 600,000 citizens (placing Las Vegas among the 25 largest cities nationally); and the city's annual budget has increased more than 1,000 percent from \$113 million to \$1.4 billion. In addition to the increased demands faced by City Council members due to the city's remarkable growth and development, City Council members have incurred additional responsibilities from homeland security concerns to issues relating to an increasingly complex regulatory, social, and economic environment.

Council members are also now committed to sitting on new regional bodies that did not exist in 1986 such as the Regional Flood Control District, Southern Nevada Water Authority, and the Clean Water Coalition. The combination of new and expanded workload and the fact that Council members are now spending more time than ever working on constituent and government business warrants consideration of a base adjustment to the annual salary of City Council members.

¹ This figure represents the base -salary from FY2007 when this research was completed.

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- In their opinion, this salary recommendation reflected a compensation that would recognize that a County Commissioner has a somewhat greater workload and larger constituency than a City Council member.
2. Raise the base salary of the Mayor to 130% of the base pay of a City Council member.
 - In nearly all of the communities that were researched, the Mayor was compensated at a higher rate than other elected officials. This may be due to the fact that the Mayor serves as the spokesperson for the municipality and typically has obligations that are not shared by other Council members.
 3. Retain the current work status of the Council members and do not make any adjustments to the Council member's ability to have outside employment.
 - The question raised in the Council Review Committee Report does not concern the number of hours spent working on city business but instead addresses the ability for Council members to have outside employment.
 4. Provide a vehicle allowance to the Mayor and Council members.

A bill was introduced in 2002 based on these recommendations, but was never voted on by the City Council.

In 2007, the Nevada legislature was asked to amend the City Charter to provide for the creation of an independent salary commission to set the compensation for Council members. That legislative request did not pass, leaving the Council with the option allowed by the City Charter to adjust compensation through adoption of an ordinance.

Compensation Comparisons

Compensation of elected officials varies widely around the country. Even in the State of Nevada, there is a wide variation of salaries of elected officials.

(Table Two)

Elected Official	Annual Salary
Governor	\$141,000
Lieutenant Governor	\$60,000
Secretary of State	\$97,000
State Controller	\$97,000
State Treasurer	\$97,000
Clark County Sheriff	\$143,661
Clark County Assessor	\$97,518
Clark County District Attorney	\$166,647
Clark County Commissioners	\$71,127
District Court Judges	\$128,700
North Las Vegas City Council	\$44,793

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National Survey Data

City/County	Population	Budget M=Million B=Billion	Government	Annual Salary of Chief Elected Official	Annual Salary of Vice-Mayor	Annual Salary of Elected Officials	Status of position	Annual Vehicle allowance for Chief Elected Official	Annual Vehicle allowance for Elected Officials
Austin, TX	735,088	2.3B	Council/Manager	\$59,298	NA	\$64,041	Full-time	\$5,400	\$5,400
Baltimore, MD	631,366	1.8B	Mayor/Council	\$125,000	NA	\$48,000	Full-time	NA	NA
Boston, MA	573,911	2.263B	Mayor/Council	\$175,000	NA	\$87,500	Full-time	City vehicle	City vehicle
Clark County, NV	1.9M	5.9B	Commissions/Manager	\$71,127	NA	\$71,127	Full-time	NA	NA
Denver, CO	566,974	838.4M	Mayor/Council	\$87,539	NA	\$78,173	Not Classified	NA	NA
Fresno, CA	481,065	897.8M	Council/Manager	\$130,000	\$70,169	\$65,000	Full-time	\$4,200	\$4,200
Henderson, NV	263,983	474M	Council/Manager	\$51,100	NA	\$41,424	Part-time	\$10,800	\$7,200
Kansas City, MO	441,965	1.22B	Council/Manager	\$101,225	NA	\$50,804	Full-time	NA	NA
Las Vegas, NV	603,000	1.4B	Council/Manager	\$59,657	NA	\$45,410	Part-time	NA	NA
Long Beach, CA	474,014	2.22B	Council/Manager	\$116,335	NA	\$87,251	Full/Part	\$5,400	\$5,400
Louisville, KY	693,604	810M	Mayor/Council	\$99,059	\$109,244	\$42,475	Full/Part	City vehicle	NA
Milwaukee, WI	578,887	1.23B	Mayor/Council	\$143,833	\$81,031	\$71,702	Full-time	City vehicle	Reimbursement
Nashville, TN	549,110	1.54B	Mayor/Council	\$136,500	\$17,000	\$15,000	Full/Part	NA	NA
North Las Vegas, NV	194,464	585.1M	Council/Manager	\$44,793	NA	\$39,122	Part-time	\$7,200	\$6,000
Oklahoma City, OK	531,324	757.8M	Council/Manager	\$24,000	NA	\$12,000	Part-time	NA	NA
Omaha, NE	414,521	442.4M	Mayor/Council	\$95,205	\$36,470	\$30,392	Full-time	NA	NA
Phoenix, AZ	1,461,575	1.021B	Council/Manager	\$88,000	NA	\$61,600	Part-time	City vehicle	Reimbursement
Portland, OR	555,560	2.93B	Commission/Manager	\$110,822	NA	\$93,350	Full-time	NA	NA
Reno, NV	203,550	460M	Council/Manager	\$63,878	NA	\$58,569	Full-time	\$9,000	\$9,000
Salt Lake, UT	178,097	201M	Mayor/Council	\$108,742	NA	\$86,994	Full/Part	\$4,800	NA
San Diego, CA	2,941,454	2.886B	Mayor/Council	\$100,464	NA	\$75,386	Full-time	\$9,600	\$9,600
Tucson, AZ	515,526	1.1B	Council/Manager	\$42,000	NA	\$24,000	Part-time	\$3,600	NA

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Western Cities Survey Data

City/County	Population	Budget M=Million B=Billion	Government	Annual Salary of Chief Elected Official	Salary of Vice- Mayor	Salary of Elected Officials	Status of position	Annual Vehicle allowance for Chief Elected Official	Annual Vehicle allowance for Elected Officials
Denver, CO	566,974	838.4M	Mayor/Council	\$87,539	NA	\$78,173	Not Classified	NA	NA
Fresno, CA	481,065	897.8M	Council/Manager	\$130,000	\$70,169	\$65,000	Full-time	\$4,200	\$4,200
Henderson, NV	263,983	474M	Council/Manager	\$51,100	NA	\$41,424	Part-time	\$10,800	\$7,200
Las Vegas, NV	603,000	1.4B	Council/Manager	\$59,657	NA	\$45,410	Part-time	NA	NA
Long Beach, CA	474,014	2.22B	Council/Manager	\$116,335	NA	\$87,251	Full/Part	\$5,400	\$5,400
North Las Vegas, NV	194,464	585.1M	Council/Manager	\$44,793	NA	\$39,122	Part-time	\$7,200	\$6,000
Phoenix, AZ	1,461,575	1.021B	Council/Manager	\$88,000	NA	\$61,600	Part-time	City vehicle	Reimbursement
Portland, OR	555,560	2.93B	Commission/Manager	\$110,822	NA	\$93,350	Full-time	NA	NA
Reno, NV	203,550	460M	Council/Manager	\$63,878	NA	\$58,569	Full-time	\$9,000	\$9,000
Salt Lake, UT	178,097	201M	Mayor/Council	\$108,742	NA	\$86,994	Full/Part	\$4,800	NA
San Diego, CA	2,941,454	2.886B	Mayor/Council	\$100,464	NA	\$75,386	Full-time	\$9,600	\$9,600
Tucson, AZ	515,526	1.1B	Council/Manager	\$42,000	NA	\$24,000	Part-time	\$3,600	NA

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Full-time Mayor Survey Data

City/County	Population	Budget M=Million B=Billion	Government	Annual Salary of Chief Elected Official	Status of position
Fresno, CA	481,065	897.8M	Council/Manager	\$130,000	Full-time
Long Beach, CA	474,014	2.22B	Council/Manager	\$116,335	Full-time
Portland, OR	555,560	2.93B	Commission/Manager	\$110,822	Full-time
Reno, NV	203,550	460M	Council/Manager	\$63,878	Full-time
Salt Lake, UT	178,097	201M	Mayor/Council	\$108,742	Full-time
San Diego, CA	2,941,454	2.886B	Mayor/Council	\$100,464	Full-time

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Conclusion

Following the guidelines of the Final Report & Recommendations provided in 1998 and staff review of other similarly-sized, western cities, the base annual salary of elected officials at the city of Las Vegas is lower than the average-base annual salary of elected officials in those similarly-sized, western cities surveyed. Because of the differences in compensation, the following could be considered:

1. Raise the base City Council member salary to 90% of the base salary of a Clark County Commissioner.*
2. Raise the base salary of the Mayor to 180% of the base salary of a City Council member.*
3. Retain the current part-time work status of the Council members and do not make any adjustments to the Council member's ability to gain or maintain outside employment.
4. Change the status of the Mayor to full-time and eliminate the ability for the Mayor of Las Vegas to have outside employment.
 - Should the position of Mayor be considered full-time, whereas the ability to have outside employment is eliminated, the salary compared to that of a Council member should be adjusted to reflect the difference in expectations. A 180 percent difference between the salary of Council member and the Mayor accounts for an average difference between Council members and Mayor's salaries in other similarly-sized, western cities.
5. Provide a vehicle allowance to the Mayor and Council members.
 - \$600.00 per month for the Mayor
 - \$500.00 per month for a Council member

** Increases in salary may only apply to officials after winning an election in the next election cycle.*

The Clark County Commissioners recently approved a four percent raise, effective July 1, 2007 which increased the base commission salary to \$71,127. Subsequent four percent raises will take the commission salary to \$73,972 in 2008, \$76,931 in 2009 and \$80,008 in 2010.

If the City Council were to approve the aforementioned recommendations, City Council salaries for Wards 2, 4, and 6 shall each be \$69,237.90 following the primary and general elections that will be held in April and June of 2009.